Department of Commerce
Growth Management Services Planner's Update

A monthly newsletter to share helpful information related to planning in Washington State

Welcome to the Planner's Update, an electronic newsletter from the Department of Commerce, Growth Management Services. We send this newsletter monthly to share helpful information related to planning in Washington State.

Please feel free to send us any comments or ideas for how to make this newsletter more useful. You can also use the link below to provide additional names of planners who might like to subscribe.

Please also consider sharing this newsletter with planning commissioners.

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1. 2011 Legislature – Bills Adopted on Planning Issues

Once again this year, the Washington State Legislature adopted a number of bills affecting the practice of planning in the state. A summary of bills passed by the 2011 Legislature related to planning issues is available on the Department of Commerce website at: Laws and Rules

Two of the biggest changes were passed in ESHB 1478 (city/county fiscal relief) and ESHB 1886 (voluntary stewardship program, aka "Ruckelshaus bill").

ESHB 1478 adjusts several timelines in the Growth Management Act, including those for required review and updates of comprehensive plans and development regulations; urban growth area review; and buildable lands reports. It also extends the period within which impact fees must be expended or encumbered from six years to ten years, and extends other deadlines related to shoreline master program updates, Phase II NPDES municipal stormwater general permit, and several state rulemaking processes. Provisions of ESHB 1478 have been incorporated into Commerce guidance materials at: Growth Management Act Periodic Update

ESHB 1886 establishes the voluntary stewardship program as an alternative to development regulations for protecting critical areas on lands used for agricultural activities. The program will be administered by the State Conservation Commission. It only applies to unincorporated areas, and counties have until January 22, 2012 to take action to opt in to the program. For more information on the voluntary stewardship program established in ESHB 1886, go to the State Conservation Commission website.

For more information on new laws related to planning, contact Leonard Bauer at *leonard.bauer@commerce.wa.gov*.

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2. **New Interactive Website Maps Priority Fish and Wildlife Species**

A new interactive mapping system that displays information about key fish and wildlife species throughout the state is now available on the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife's (WDFW) website at *http://wdfw.wa.gov/mapping/phs/*.

The free mapping tool, called "PHS on the Web," allows users to zoom in on specific properties or scan broad geographical areas to determine the presence of fish and wildlife species identified as priorities for conservation and management.

The same mapping feature also identifies critical fish and wildlife habitat types, ranging from coastal wetlands to eastside shrub-steppe.

PHS on the Web is the latest in several interactive mapping systems now available on the WDFW website. Another example is called SalmonScape, which displays information about the state's salmon-recovery efforts.

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3. **Washington State Launches New Geographic Data and Map Website**

Have you ever wondered where Google and Bing get the information that appears on their online maps? Often, it comes straight from government map data, which is becoming increasingly easier to access online. Now, the State of Washington is hoping to make it easier for you to search and find the huge amount of geographic data it tracks, whether you're a Geographic Information System (GIS) specialist or a just a curious member of the public.

The Washington State Department of Information Services this week launched the Washington State Geospatial Portal, found online at *http://geography.wa.gov*. The site is a way to access a wide variety of maps, interactive mapping applications, and geographic data hosted on government websites.

Through the Geospatial Portal, you can:

- [Download data](#) to view in other map programs like Google Earth or Bing Maps.
- [Access online interactive mapping applications](#), with the ability to select and zoom areas, choose layers, and print. Interactive maps included on the site show information such as broadband speeds, sales tax rates, and comparisons of legislative districts.
- [View or download maps](#) showing a variety of information, including county population densities, tsunami and flood hazard areas, or soils and farming data.

The Department of Information Services is encouraging users to check back often on the site as more content is loaded over the coming months.

Are you a local government with data to share? The site's creators plan to include links to maps and data held by cities and counties in Washington State. Local governments can help expand the site by sending a link to their online maps and data files to the Washington State GIS Coordinator, Joy Paulus, at *joy.paulus@did.wa.gov*

4. **Information Available from Ecology's Online Applications**

You've likely heard the commercial that says, "We've got an app for that." The Department of Ecology has on-line applications for information useful to local planenrs, too, along with the databases and innovative technological tools that help organize and access critical information.

Increasingly, these apps and databases are more integrated and easily accessible to the general public.

[PARIS](#) makes it easy for operations with water quality permits to file their required discharge monitoring reports online.

Significant additions to the [current Coastal Atlas](#) are expected this summer including a new Beach Public Access tool that will allow users to go online and not only find local beaches but also get information about water quality and recreational options.

The new [Webmaps](#) showcases water right information statewide and for the Office of Columbia River. The public can use these webmaps to locate water right information.

The Environmental Information Management System ([EIM](#)) which is Ecology's main database for environmental monitoring data currently holds about 10 million

records (and growing) on physical, chemical, and biological analyses and measurements. The data is used for environmental modeling, site cleanup determination, rule making, and special projects like the water quality assessment. MyEIM is a specialized component of EIM that allows users to develop custom queries and analyze the data with respect to regulatory standards.

Real time air quality monitoring data is available on the Washington Air Quality Advisory Website.

The Facility/Site tool contains a wealth of information about Ecology-regulated facilities and sites around the state and can help answer questions such as "What activities occur at the facility, what permits does it hold, and who can I contact to get more information?"

Take a few minutes to check out the applications and data available at your fingertips!

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